

7. CORRIDOR AND SPECIAL AREA RECOMMENDATIONS



As with the summary of existing conditions outlined earlier and the business strategy and design guidelines that follow, it is useful to discuss the recommendations for Kennedy Street both in terms of the corridor as a whole and as a collection of three special areas.

The Vision's core themes, as enumerated in the previous chapter, frame the recommendations. Drawing on the results of discussions and meetings with the community, they include both public policy initiatives for the corridor as a whole as well as place-specific changes that collectively can provide the impetus for Kennedy Street's revitalization.

Following the corridor-wide recommendations, the plan examines in more detail the three sub-areas that make up the corridor, showing how these recommendations might be applied under the different conditions that exist in those areas. The plan also provides a series of development scenarios, or examples of what physical revitalization could potentially look like at specific points along the corridor.

The Corridor as a Whole

In community workshops, residents expressed great concern about the general physical state of the corridor. Issues ranged from concern about graffiti, trash, perception of crime, at-risk youth, and abandoned properties to the desire for more mixed-use development, improving building facades, and increasing the amount of green space along the corridor. Creating a safe, clean, and pedestrian-friendly environment was seen as a high priority. In addition, there was a stated desire that the future of Kennedy Street includes those who already live and work along the corridor. Growth and change should accommodate a diverse population, provide additional affordable housing, and retain the overall neighborhood character.

The core themes drawn from the Kennedy Street's vision have shaped the community's goals for the corridor as a whole. The plan's Implementation Matrix, in Section 10, sets a series of steps by which these goals can be realized.

Renovation of Existing Buildings

A major element of the corridor's overall revitalization focuses on the existing building stock. Thus, in addition to the major proposed transformations of sites described later, there are many places along the corridor that would be dramatically improved through façade and streetscape

renovations. In many cases, there are fine examples of architecturally significant buildings which have been masked under years of neglect or renovations which have detracted from their historic character. Sensitive renovations would provide the opportunity to return these buildings to their previous condition, allowing them to add value to the architecture of the streetscape. Many buildings along the corridor could follow the model of the recently completed renovation of the Kennedy Theater in the 300 block into the Kennedy Senior Wellness Center, becoming an active part of the community's future.

In addition, there are several discrete parcels which, at the time this report is being prepared, appear to be boarded and vacant. Attention to these sites will help in the overall improvement of the corridor. They are:

1. 900 block – 931, 929 (residential)
2. 800 block – 809, 806 (residential)
3. 700 block – 708 (commercial), 710 (commercial)
4. 400 block – 443 (commercial), 408 (residential)
5. 300 block – 308 (commercial), 350 (commercial)
6. 100 block – 114 (commercial), 104 (commercial), 105 (commercial)

Recommendations:

- 1) Preserve and upgrade the many older buildings along the corridor
- 2) Encourage visual connections and active ground floor uses.



The existing building on the northeast corner of 7th and Kennedy Street.



New awnings, signage, transparent storefronts, lighting, and landscaping can help transform this historic building into a more lively and welcoming part of the streetscape. This image also shows the significant impact of relocating the utilities.

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THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESS THESE CONCERNS AND PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR MORE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES:

Clean and Safe Neighborhood

- Strengthen the relationships with law enforcement and other community organizations to monitor and respond to public safety problems and issues, including trash pick-up, graffiti, and street cleaning.
- Support programs and services to embrace at-risk youth in the neighborhood, including job training and increased awareness and education to eliminate gang activity, drug use, and juvenile crime.
- Identify vacant and/or dangerous buildings to enforce suitable building code compliance and develop a strategy for reuse.



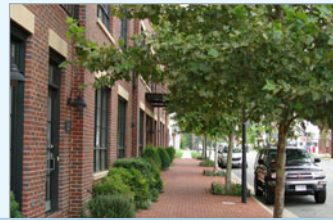
Vision Goal: Ensure a safe and beneficial environment to live work and play

- Increase the visual and physical connectivity between storefronts and the sidewalk to add vibrancy to the street and improve safety through more “eyes on the street.”

- Expand the Beacon Brightwood Business Alliance’s “clean and safe” initiative, supported by the Neighborhood Investment Fund, to the entire corridor by expanding the boundaries of the NIF area itself.

Creating Special Places

- Increase the quality of the pedestrian experience through sidewalk enhancements, benches, plantings, and specialty pavings.



Vision Goal: Increase the quality of the pedestrian experience through sidewalk enhancements

- Develop appropriate signage, lighting, façade guidelines which relate to and support the existing buildings.
- Encourage infill development and the reuse and rehabilitation of existing buildings.

Economic Development and Housing

- Support programs that enable existing residents to stay in the neighborhood, including providing affordable housing along the corridor and assisting existing retailers to succeed.
- Expand retail and service options to better reflect the needs of Kennedy Street’s diverse community.

- Support area business associations and non-profits in order to provide technical assistance to area businesses.



Vision Goal: Encourage new mixed-income, mixed-use development, while providing opportunities for existing residents and businesses

- Actively promote existing property tax relief as well as energy assistance programs designed to support senior citizen and lower income homeowners retain their homes.
- Apply for a Main Street designation (*See page*

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7.20 for a description of the Main Street program).

- Work with City and other agencies on marketing initiatives to attract neighborhood-serving retailers – grocery, hardware, coffee shop – to Kennedy Street.
- Focus new mixed use development around key areas by targeting resources or incentives to aid in economic development.

Transportation and Public Realm

- Encourage a “greening of the street” through continuous lines of trees and other landscape elements, including the preservation of existing older trees.
- Implement a parking study to assess the cur-

rent supply and projected future needs.

- Maintain and improve the look of the utility poles through creative means, if undergrounding them is not feasible in the near future.
- Connect to existing and proposed bike routes.

Collaboration and Partnering

- Create a Kennedy Street Task Force to partner with the District to help drive the Plan’s implementation.
- Establish or expand an existing community development entity to set priorities; create an implementation work plan in conjunction with City agency partners; and work toward identifying District, Federal, and other funding sources.



Vision Goal: Create a walkable, safe public realm that encourages mobility and connectivity



Vision Goal: Empower residents to support the implementation of the Plan.

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Kennedy Street's Three Unique Areas



THE FOLLOWING DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS SERVE TO HIGHLIGHT POTENTIAL PHYSICAL CHANGES TO THE CORRIDOR

The success of the revitalization of Kennedy Street can be enhanced by identifying ways to focus improvements that draw on the existing strengths of the urban pattern or infrastructure. The approach to the corridor as a series of special places with unique physical characteristics can be translated directly into a series of recommendations which relate to land use, character, and relationship to the surrounding community.

Kennedy Street can be approached as three unique areas:

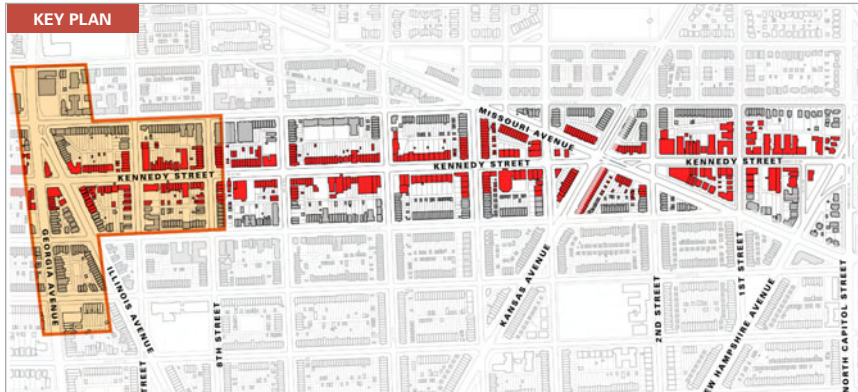
- area 1:** Georgia Avenue to 8th Street
- area 2:** 8th Street to the Kansas/Missouri intersection
- area 3:** Kansas/Missouri to North Capitol Street

With its proximity to Georgia Avenue,

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AREA 1: GEORGIA AVENUE TO 8TH STREET



this area has the potential to tap into the activity and energy along that “Great Street” and share in its success. The scale and level of activity along Georgia Avenue could support increased densities for housing and commercial uses and provide an excellent opportunity to redefine the image of Kennedy Street to the broader district through the creation of new, vibrant, highly visible development. Increased density at this “gateway” to Kennedy Street would also have minimal impact on the smaller-scale, finer-grained housing and retail patterns further into the neighborhood.

In addition, the existing pattern of locally-owned businesses occupying ground floors of the historic row houses in the 900 block could be expanded to create a district for small entrepreneurial enterprises to grow and thrive.



Façade, signage, and lighting improvements could help reestablish the character of many older buildings along the corridor.



Townhouses could continue to provide small, entrepreneurial store owners a presence along Kennedy Street.



Small retail and carry-outs could take advantage of wide sidewalks for small seating areas or merchandising.

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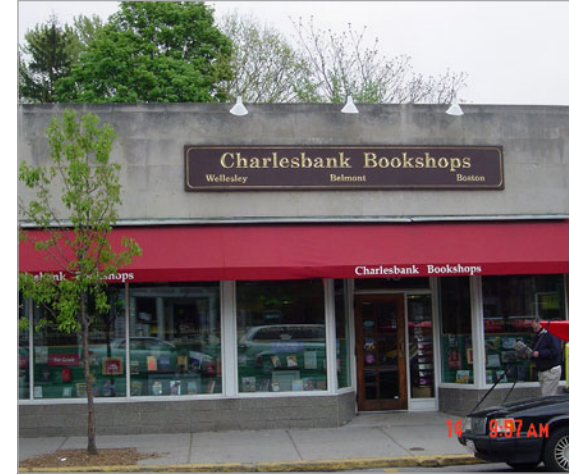
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Recommendations:

- 1) Strengthen the capacity for neighborhood-friendly live-work ventures within existing or new row houses.
- 2) Enhance transitional areas between residential entrances and the sidewalk with landscaping and attractive fencing. Also provide for more street trees.
- 3) Investigate opportunities for affordable housing within new residential or mixed-use projects.
- 4) Encourage greater densities and active ground floor uses at Georgia Avenue.
- 5) Ensure that signage, lighting, and retail storefronts are compatible with the residential character of the area.



New housing above retail allows for the creation of more affordable units and helps support the expansion of lively retail activity.



Simple signage, lighting, and transparent storefronts help make this retailer part of a pleasant pedestrian experience.

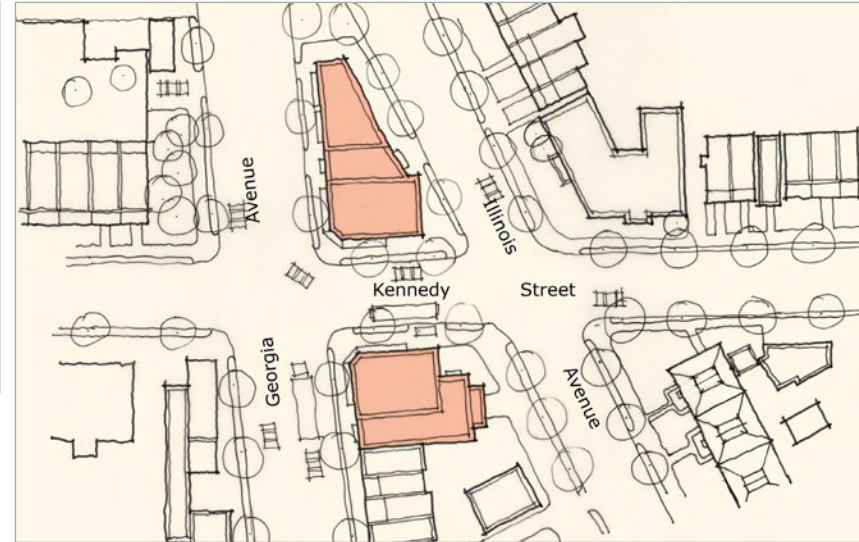
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GEORGIA AVENUE AND KENNEDY STREET

The two parcels on the north and south sides of the Georgia and Kennedy intersection are currently occupied by a one story commercial building with limited windows to the south and a two story mixed use building with service areas to the north. Georgia Avenue has been designated as one of the Districts “Great Streets” and has seen a great deal of investment activity recently; it also serves as a major vehicular route for those traveling in and out of the downtown area. This highly visible location provides the opportunity to create a new “gateway” to the Kennedy Street corridor through the redevelopment of these two parcels as special buildings with a more significant visual presence.



Potential site plan at Georgia Avenue and Kennedy Street

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The existing corner as seen from Georgia Avenue looking southeast

A pair of mixed use buildings with retail or services on the ground floor and mixed income housing above could provide a signal to the greater community that Kennedy Street is a place to live and work and help Kennedy Street tap into the energy and vitality of a resurgent Georgia Avenue. While four-story as-of-right heights would be sufficient to create a significant gateway to the corridor, this intersection is also one in which increased heights could be possible without threatening the neighborhood character of the area. Whether 4 or 6 stories in height, the highest portion of these sites should be directly at the corner, with areas of lower height stepping down toward the surrounding context.



A pair of new 4-story mixed use buildings could help form an attractive gateway to the Kennedy Street corridor. This site could also contain taller structures given its location along Georgia Avenue. (see page 8.5)

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AREA 2: 8TH STREET TO KANSAS/MISSOURI AVENUES



The corner of 5th Street should become a more active neighborhood “hub” taking advantage of its central location and wide sidewalks.



Existing housing should be protected and enhanced through façade and landscape improvements.



Existing neighborhood services and retail should be supported and new businesses should be encouraged to respond to the changing needs of the area.

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As the geographic center of the Kennedy Street corridor, Area 2 provides the opportunity to enhance the quality of life for the neighborhood by further becoming the zone which is dominated by housing and neighborhood-oriented retail and services. In particular, the community felt that the 5th Street intersection had the capability to play a significant role in the revitalization of the neighborhood.

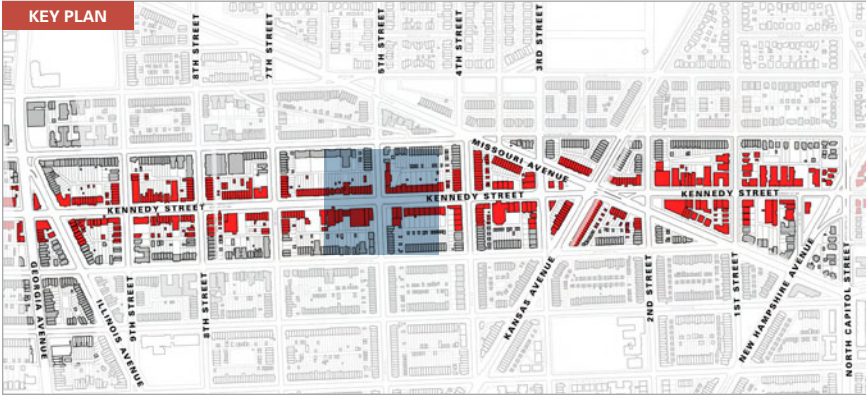
Recommendations:

- 1) Create a vibrant neighborhood “hub” at the corner of 5th and Kennedy with inviting, transparent storefronts with entrances facing out onto both streets.
- 2) Encourage uses such as cafes, sit-down restaurants, a youth center, or farmer’s market.
- 3) Strengthen all four corners by allowing buildings to “wrap” the corner, with continuous

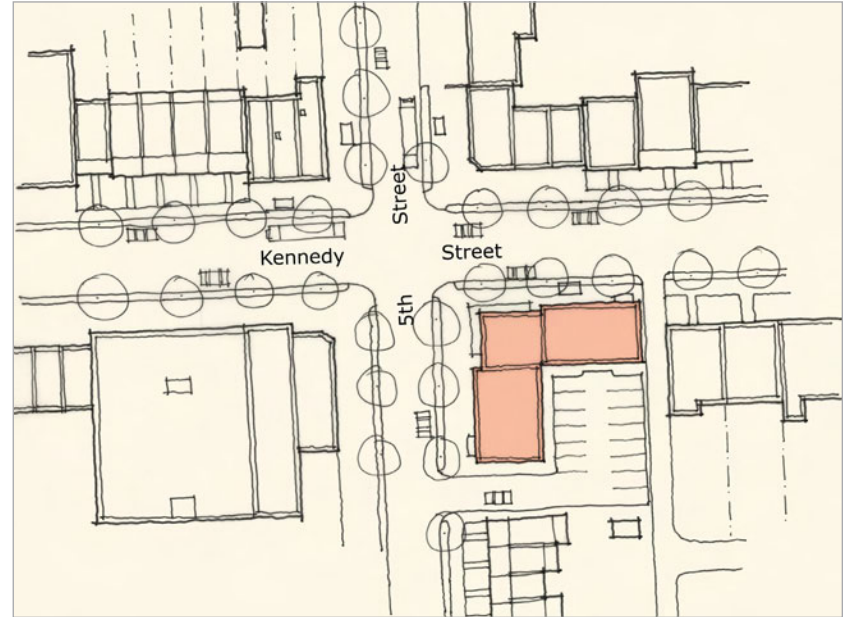


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activity on the ground floor.



- 4) Preserve and enhance the character of the existing residential areas through façade renovation and landscape enhancement programs.
- 5) Part of the creation of a neighborhood “hub” should include the expansion of affordable housing near the transit lines.



The opportunity here is to bring the building massing out to the sidewalk and locate the parking in a concealed location.

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The existing southeast corner of 5th Street

5TH STREET AND KENNEDY STREET

Through the community process, the intersection of 5th and Kennedy was identified by neighborhood residents as a place which has the potential to serve as the “hub of the neighborhood”. It was envisioned as a place which could take advantage of its geographically centralized location, use as a transit crossroads, and currently underutilized parcels and become a more active place which could host a successful location for housing, retail and services, or a business incubator.

The southeast corner of this intersection currently contains a one-story building with parking set toward the rear of the property with a parking located along the street. This opportunity scenario would reverse this relationship by bringing a new building up to the sidewalk’s edge and locating the parking areas away from the street, shielded from view in the rear of the lot.

Providing space for active ground floor uses with transparent storefronts would help enliven the sidewalk, while creating new mixed-income housing units on the upper floors would provide a greater degree of sidewalk safety due to additional “eyes on the street.” Increased heights at the corners would help provide visual prominence and allow for more housing in the upper floors. The building should provide a graceful transition to the surrounding two-story housing along both Kennedy Street and 5th Street.



Additional height at the intersection helps give prominence and adds vibrancy to the corners.

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AREA 3: KANSAS/MISSOURI AVENUES TO NORTH CAPITOL STREET



Due to its physical and psychological separation from the western part of the corridor, this area feels the most like a discrete and definable district. This is accentuated by the increase in scale and shift in building type due to the larger lot sizes in this zone and by the fact that the broad sidewalk dimensions found primarily at the corners in Areas 1 and 2 are nearly continuous throughout Area 3.

This combination of physical factors could enable this area to develop a unique identity or “brand” within the District and be place in which destination retailers mix with locally focused services, activities are allowed to spill out of the buildings and onto the wide sidewalks, and large numbers of new and existing residents can access a range of housing options.



Large, blank walls could become places where the life of the interior of the building is brought out onto the street for all to see.



Elements which disconnect the interior of retailers with the street could be removed, allowing the life of the buildings to visually or physically spill out onto the wide sidewalks.



Underutilized lots could become places to pursue development opportunities which would improve the livability and economic vitality of the corridor.

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Recommendations:

- 1) Create a vibrant, dynamic district for both residents and non-residents, with activities spilling out of buildings and onto the wide sidewalks.
- 2) Use the area's larger lots and building types to attract destination retailers.
- 3) Work with faith-based organizations and other institutions to enliven blank storefronts by developing creative ways to bring the life of the building's interior out to the sidewalk.
- 4) Improve pedestrian safety, particularly at the Kansas/Missouri intersection through landscaping, highly visible specialty crosswalks, and dedicated signage.
- 5) Support the creation of mixed-income housing
- 6) Encourage the development of this area as cultural/arts district, taking advantage of the wide sidewalks and larger building areas.



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MISSOURI/KANSAS INTERSECTION AND KENNEDY STREET



The intersection of Missouri and Kansas Avenues is a unique condition along the Kennedy Street corridor. In addition to being the crossroads of two major district streets, the intersecting geometry of these two avenues serves as a natural physical and mental divider between the eastern and western sections of Kennedy Street. Currently used as a gas station, the community identified this area as being a good location for a public park and as a place to focus efforts on increasing pedestrian safety while navigating the intersection's complex crossings.



Option A: Relocation of the service station and creation of a new public park



Option B: Enhanced landscaping around the existing service station would help create a more pleasant pedestrian environment.

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The existing intersection of Missouri and Kansas Avenues

This scenario envisions a significant area of green space for passive recreation which can serve as a respite for those in the surrounding community and also beautify the image of Kennedy Street to those who travel through the area along the Avenues. Ideally, the service station could be relocated to a new site in the general vicinity (Option A). If not, a treatment of the existing site to enhance the landscaping would still provide the additional “greening” of the corridor

that the community desires (Option B). In either case, significant improvements to signal timing, expanded crosswalk striping, patterns, or materials, and potential roadway realignment should be investigated to help make the intersection more pedestrian friendly.



Option A: A new public park



Option B: Enhanced landscape and furnishings

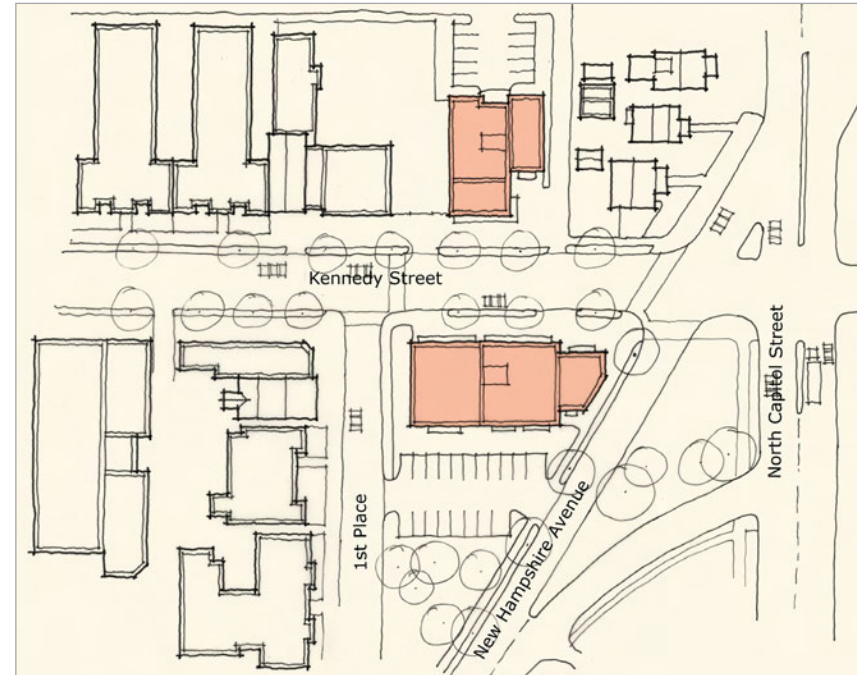
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NORTH CAPITOL AND KENNEDY STREET

Currently, the north and south sides of the North Capitol and Kennedy Street intersection are occupied by a vacant automobile garage and a service station, respectively. Yet similar to the opportunity to create a highly visible gateway to the corridor at the Georgia Avenue intersection, the North Capitol intersection has the potential to signal the presence of Kennedy Street to the broader marker and community. While perhaps not as easily accessible by car due to the roadway configuration, redevelopment of the north and south sides of Kennedy Street would provide a symbolic gesture that the area was a desirable place to live, work, and shop.



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Three- to four-story mixed use buildings could accommodate both destination retailers on the ground level and a variety of housing opportunities, including affordable housing, on upper floors. Larger buildings areas would sit in context with the several large existing apartment buildings and commercial structures and accommodate a different style of retailer than other places along the corridor, helping to give a unique quality to this eastern-most area. The broad sidewalks in this area also provide the opportunity to find uses whose activities could spill out onto the street to help make the pedestrian experience more lively, safe, and exciting.



DC Main Streets

DC Main Streets provides five years of comprehensive technical and financial assistance to revitalize older neighborhood business districts.

Local Main Street programs are competitively selected to support retail investment in the District. Each selected neighborhood business district is organized by local volunteers and community development professionals.

The DC Main Streets initiative is based on the nationally proven model developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which uses a four point practical neighborhood business district management strategy.